UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Radio Service
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Wednesday, January 14, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Wabbling Parents." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Good Food Habits for Children."

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"If I had my way, Aunt Sammy, your next chat would be addressed to parents and it would be a very serious talk on a very serious subject!"

My Next-Door-Neighbor said this while she was sewing buttons on a suit belonging to her small nephew. From the forceful way she pushed her needle in and the energetic way she pulled it out, I guessed immediately that she was in a mood to reform one of the evils in the world.

"I know," I said. "You want me to make a very serious talk about convenient fastenings on children's clothes. Shall I start by quoting a sentence from the bulletin on Suits for the Small Boy? 'Simple front openings with buttons and buttonholes that are easily manipulated, uniform in size and always in the same convenient place, make it possible for a boy to dress himself at an early age. A suit with more than a dozen buttons is a distinct discouragement to self-help.' How is that?"

"That is very good advice, Aunt Sammy, but I had something else on my mind."

"Well, then I might start this way: 'A button three-fourths to seven-eighths of an inch in diameter is large enough for the child to hold while putting it through the buttonhole or loop, and it is a good size for children's garments.' Is that better?"

"My Neighbor put down her sewing.

"The subject I have been thinking about had nothing to do with buttons, Aunt Sammy. What I want you to talk about is wabbling parents."

"Gracious, they are a variety I never heard of. Are they products of the South Seas or Abyssinia, by any chance? Grateful as I always am for your suggestions, my knowledge of geography is limited and I doubt if I could make a success of talking about a kind of parents I never heard of."

"Fathers and mothers who wabble by nature inhabit America probably more than the South Seas or any other far-off spot. I see them every day on all sides. And, in my opinion, they do far more harm than jazz or late hours. If you really wanted to be a help in this world, you would say at least a few words about the harmful effects of parents who wabble."

"But I don't know who these parents are or what they are."

My Neighbor took down my big dictionary from the shelves.

"The word wabble is defined here as meaning to vacillate or to exhibit unevenness. That is what I am talking about. Parents who vacillate. Fathers who are uncertain and say one thing one day and another thing the next, and mothers who don't know their own minds and give their children a feeling of constant uncertainty. Parents who wabble, it seems to me, must confuse the most intelligent baby about what is to be expected in this world and what behavior is desirable.

"Some parents wabble most of the time while they are bringing up their children. For example, the two-year-old may pull Father's books out of the bookcase one day, just by way of amusing himself, and Father may think it is 'cute' and give a pleased response, such as, 'You little monkey. What are you up to with my books? Look, Mother, I believe the boy is going to be a literary genius of some kind. He seems to like the heavy reading.' Of course, Tommy doesn't understand just what his parents are saying, but he does understand the tones of approval. Next time he is near the books, he pulls some out again, but the effect on Father is quite different. Father rushes toward him and shouts, 'Leave those books alone. They aren't for you to play with.' Small Tommy can't understand this. Even when Dad adds, 'Your hands are sticky and you'll ruin the books,' he can't see <u>why</u> such a storm as this. He doesn't realize, of course, that Dad is especially tired this evening, and worried beside. But even if he knew it, it would hardly make the situation seem fair to him. Mother and Dad laughed so the other time. Why couldn't one of them have come to him more quietly just now and explained about the sticky fingers and taken the book away gently? This shouting at him gave him such a shock!

"The job of learning how to behave and what all these grown-ups <u>do</u> want anyway must be terribly difficult, if not impossible, in some households. There, Aunt Sammy, I've been preaching a regular sermon, haven't I?"

My Neighbor picked up her sewing and started on another button.

"Now that we're on the subject, you might say a little about how wabbling parents can reform," I suggested.

"Careful, honest and persistent attention to the habitual treatment they give the child would be the way to avoid wabbling. Parents ought to take time out every now and then and ask themselves a few questions about their behavior toward their children."

"Such as--"

"They might ask themselves: Do I cajole my child into behaving one time, force him to behave another, and let him have his own way the third time, under circumstances that seem all the same to him, though perhaps they do not to me? If so, no wonder he is filled with doubt and misgivings and has no idea what to expect of me. No wonder he tries me out to see just what he can get by with. No wonder he sometimes forms the habit of disregarding what I say when he discovers that I may not really mean it.

Yes, I am going to give you a menu today. How would you like a meal planned with the children in mind? The Menu Specialist suggested that it was high time for a dinner with a liver dish in it. Liver, you know, was once a humble meat, but in recent years it has become quite famous because it is so rich in iron and vitamins. For growing children it is especially good. Many housekeepers serve it to their families once a week. Of course, such a good food should be prepared in a delicious way. So I am suggesting a liver and rice loaf; String Beans; Waldorf Salad; and, for dessert, Orange Custard. I will read that menu again: Liver and Rice Loaf; String Beans; Waldorf Salad; and, for dessert, Orange Custard.

For the liver and rice loaf there are ten ingredients. Here they are:

1/2 cup rice
4 cups boiling water
1 pound sliced liver
2 tablespoons fat
1 small onion, chopped fine
1 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped parsley
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup tomatoes, canned or fresh, and
2 teaspoons salt.

I will repeat that list of ten ingredients. (REPEAT).

Cook the rice until tender in boiling water. Do not drain it, but let the rice absorb the water so as to form a sticky mass to act as binder for the loaf. Wipe the liver with a damp cloth, remove the skin, and sprinkle with salt and flour. Melt the fat in a skillet, put in the floured liver and cook for about 3 minutes. Remove the liver and chop it up fine. Cook the onion, celery, and parsley in the drippings for a few minutes, add the flour and tomatoes, and stir until thickened. Mix all the ingredients until thoroughly blended. Then shape into a loaf with the hands and place it on parchment paper on a rack in an open roasting pan, and bake for about 30 minutes in a moderate oven (350 degree F.)

Waldorf salad is a combination of diced apple, celery, and nuts. Orange custard is made by pouring soft custard over slices of orange. The recipe for soft custard is found on page 55 of the green cook book.

Thursday: "A Long Life for Kitchenware."

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